VERITAS
VERITATUM

Class 230.3 R Book St 32
General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

Purchased from the fund bequeathed to the Seminary by
EUGENE AUGUSTUS HOFFMAN, D. D.
DEAN 1879-1902

VERITAS VERITATUM

AN ESSAY ON TRUTH

BY THE

REV. C. STEENBUCH, B.D.

GEN. THEO. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

PUBLISHED IN LONDON BY THE FAITH PRESS
AT THE FAITH HOUSE, 22 BUCKINGHAM STREET,
STRAND. W.C., AND IN AMERICA BY THE YOUNG
CHURCHMAN COMPANY AT MILWAUKEE, . .
1915.

230.3R
St 32

62694

DEDICATED

To the worshippers at St. Peter's, Streatham,

In memory of Lent, 1915.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

PREFACE.

TO attempt a demonstration of any Catholic dogma without first proving the truth of Catholicism itself, can only end in failure. Whether the dogma is founded on Holy Scripture or on the authority of the Church, the further question as to the infallibility of either must necessarily arise. Hence Catholicism—which resolves the two above sources into one—must be put on its proper philosophical basis first, and then the truth of the different dogmas follows as a logical consequence. In other words, the *Veritas Veritatum* must be considered before the *Veritates,* Catholicism before Catholic dogmas. Such is the main purpose of this book.

The development of Christian apologetics should coincide with the development of philosophy, but so far, theologians seem to have either defended the Faith by obsolete weapons, or else accommodated the Faith to modern thought. The result of the former is failure, of the latter, heresy. The obvious necessity, therefore, of proving the Faith by modern thought and the earnest desire of supplying this need have prompted the author to venture upon a task which greater thinkers might possibly have accomplished more successfully.

July, 1915. C.S.

INTRODUCTION.

THE terms "soul" and "spirit" are by no means clearly defined either in philosophy or theology. Frequently we find them used almost synonymously, and if a distinction is made, such distinction is not always as clear as we should wish it to be. It would, however, seem best to restrict the term "soul" to the organ (if this word may be applied to what is non-material) of thought, feeling, and will, in which case the functions of the soul become the subject-matter of psychology. "Spirit" might then be defined as that which regulates the functions of the soul, the soul again regulating the functions of the

bodily organs. According to this definition, man might rightly be termed a trinity, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, and a fuller meaning would be attached to the expression in Gen. i. 26 of man being made "in God's image." The spirit thus regulates thought, feeling, and will in accordance with, and towards their respective ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness. But perfect truth, beauty, and goodness means God; hence we may say that the spirit guides us towards God, and thus the theologian and the philosopher agree in fact, though differing in terminology.

The function of the soul being thus three-fold, the function of the spirit becomes correspondingly three-fold, and each department may be studied separately, as it is actually done in Logic, Aesthetics, and Ethics

respectively, these branches of philosophy dealing with the three ideals towards which the soul is guided by the spirit. Thus Logic establishes and deals with the laws which thought must obey in order to arrive at truth, but it is left to the metaphysician to examine the ultimate validity of those laws, as it is also outside the scope of Logic to define truth. Each link of an argument may be in proper logical form and the connection between the links may be in strict accordance with the laws of Logic, and yet the conclusion will be false if one of the propositions is untrue. It is just here that Logic merges into Metaphysics, the former dealing with the form, the latter with the truth of a proposition. If the premisses are true and the syllogism is in accordance with the laws of Logic, the conclusion will

be true, but how are we to know whether the premisses be true?

To answer this question it is necessary first to ask what is meant by the term "true," or rather what is meant by the corresponding noun, "truth." What is truth? Which are the tests for truth? How do we arrive at truth? These questions, so closely connected, must be answered before the validity of any other investigation, whether theological or scientific or philosophical, can be ascertained. But how are these questions to be answered? There seems to be no standpoint, no *terra firma,* from which they may be approached, any investigation apparently involving a *petitio principii.* Strictly speaking, this is so; but, unless we are to be content with mere Pyrrhonism, we must, in this as in all other kinds of investigation,

take something for granted, and if we can then arrive at a conclusion which serves all practical purposes of life, we must be satisfied. If we are to define a term, we must find out how the term is used and formulate the definition accordingly; beyond that we cannot go. Our basis must be human experience, since it is impossible for human beings to go outside human experience. The Ego must be examined by the Ego.

human experience; in real life, sensation is always accompanied by other psychological elements, only discoverable by minute introspective analysis. Besides, no question of reality or truth arises, or can possibly arise, till we reach the next level of mental activity, viz. *perception.*

In perception we have a synthesis of sensations, i.e. by a combination —involuntary and instantaneous—of sensations,* accompanied by other complicated psychological processes, we reach the idea of a definite object, a definite apple, table, etc. Are these processes wholly reliable? The answer must be in the negative, experience soon convincing us that each sense, taken by itself, is no sufficient criterion of truth. "I heard it with my own ears," "I saw it with my own eyes," cannot be re-

* Generally different sensations of *one* sense.

garded as entirely satisfactory evidence. Let several people give a description of the same event, witnessed by each, and discrepancies will nearly always occur, proportionate to the complication of the event and to the mental state of the witnesses. Some senses are more reliable than others, but none are infallible. Besides, no sensation is without its accompanying element of feeling of pleasure or displeasure, but such feeling being mainly subjective, the sensation will be coloured accordingly, and the unreliability of each sense further increased. Doubt therefore arises, and it is to this doubt that we may ultimately trace the momentous question: What is truth? Each sense is found by experience to be more or less untrustworthy, and additional tests therefore become necessary in

order to establish the truth of objective reality even on the perceptional level of consciousness.

Supposing I see an apple at a distance, how do I know it is a real apple? First of all, let us bear in mind that, strictly speaking, we do not *see* the apple; we see a certain form, a certain colour, etc., and then through complicated mental processes, described in psychology, we *infer* that the object is an apple. But is this inference valid? The object in question may be an imitation of an apple, sufficiently artistic to deceive even the keenest sight. Further tests therefore become necessary, if I wish to convince myself of the reality of the apple. What do I do then? I take the apple in my hand, feel it, smell it, taste it, and thus by a combination of my senses I arrive at the truth.

Further tests, physical and chemical, might be necessary with less familiar objects, but the conclusion is the same:—*The truth of perception is established through consistency of sensations.*

This, however, is merely the lowest form of truth, of value to myself only, and at that particular moment only. The apple is real, as far as I am concerned, but supposing I am dreaming at the moment of observation, then the reality would disappear with the cessation of the dream. Thus we find what we might call a lower and a higher form of reality, and the question is how to distinguish between them. "Dream" and "reality" are not, as it is commonly supposed, contradictory terms, as far as the individual is concerned; yet, as only the latter is found to be of any

practical value in life, we wish to be able to apply further tests to ascertain whether we are dreaming or awake at any particular moment. The former is impossible, the latter comparatively easy. While I am dreaming, I do not realise that I am dreaming, but on awakening I can, by means of my memory, connect up my experience into a chain of logically interrelated events. I dream, e.g., that I am travelling in China, and everything is real to me for the time being. On awakening, however, I find myself the centre of a different reality, and comparing the events of the dream with those immediately preceding and following the dream, I am able to make a clear distinction between the two sets of experience, since I conclude it would have been impossible to cover the distance within the period

of my dream, besides which I discover gaps at either end of the interposed experience. Thus there is a wider consistency in the higher reality than in the lower, and thus through the width of the consistency we are able to distinguish between what we must term momentary and continuous reality.

We have called momentary reality "lower," continuous reality "higher," but might we not reverse the two sets of experience and regard dreaming experience as the higher? Or might not the two be on the same level of reality? If our dreams could be connected up into a consecutive chain of events, so that in any subsequent dream we always start where we left off in the last dream, our experience would consist of a double set of events on exactly the same level of reality; but such is not the

case. Our dreams are disconnected, our periods of experience, while awake, coherent and consistent; hence the latter are rightly regarded as on a higher level of reality than the former, since they are of wider consistency.

Thus we have passed from momentary to continuous reality, but only so far as the individual is concerned. Such reality is only of value to the individual, not directly to anybody else. The individual may be a lunatic, and although his experience might be in accordance with the tests for truth applied by himself, yet others would not always agree with him. Hence it is necessary to go a step higher, passing from individual to general truth, and it will be easily seen that an exactly corresponding test must be applied, namely, consistency of general ex-

perience. To our individual experience we must add the testimony of reliable witnesses, and thus we ascend from individual to general experience, from individual to general truth, the test being the same throughout, namely, *consistency*.

We have, however, been anticipating, and must now return to the point we arrived at in our psychological analysis, viz. perception. By synthesis of sensations we reach perception and thus form ideas of things, i.e. of objective reality; but we go further than that:—by combining perceptions we reach *conception,* i.e. we are able to form ideas of things without any of the corresponding objects being actually present; thus we can think of an apple, a man, a horse, etc., apart from any visual sensation of such.

In fact, whenever we *identify* a given object, the two processes of perception and conception are combined by means of memory; thus when I have a certain perception, my memory brings out other similar perceptions for comparison, and in this way I am able to name the object perceived, and use this name as a starting point for further mental activity. Throughout these processes the test of consistency is continually applied to prove the validity of each, and anything which falls short of the test is rejected.

But we go even further than that; for having formed concepts we are able to co-ordinate these and form new concepts, i.e. we are able to compare thoughts with thoughts; and thus we reach the highest level of mental activity, viz. reasoning, the peculiar function of the spirit,

through which our thoughts are regulated and guided towards ultimate truth. To think is to compare percepts, to reason is to compare thoughts; further than that it is impossible for human beings to go, and any higher level, if such were in existence, would be totally incomprehensible to human thought.

We have ascended from perceptional to conceptional reality, from psychical to spiritual function, and the question now arises how to test the validity of this latter function; in other words, what is the criterion of true reasoning?

True reasoning is reasoning which leads to truth, and—as stated in the Introduction—such reasoning must be in accordance with the laws of Logic. Having reached true ideas we co-ordinate these ideas in logical syllogisms, and thus new ideas are

built up. These new ideas are again formed into syllogisms, and thus we may proceed as far as thought will go. If the original premisses are true, we shall then arrive at further truths, the laws of Logic supplying the tests of true reasoning.

But what is the basis of these laws? Laws of Logic are, like physical laws, founded on observation and experiment. We observe that certain co-ordinations of ideas lead to results in accordance with, others to results contrary to, truths already ascertained, and the laws are formulated accordingly; e.g., if I argue thus:

All Jews are monotheists
(A-Proposition).
∴ All monotheists are Jews,

I can by observation ascertain that such is not the case. Only some

monotheists are Jews, and the argument must therefore take this form:

All Jews are monotheists
(A-Proposition).
∴ Some monotheists are Jews
(I-Proposition).

By substituting other propositions and proceeding in the same way, I soon find that this holds good whichever propositions are used, and thus the logical law that an A-Proposition by conversion becomes an I-Proposition is formulated. Hence laws of Logic are formulated by constant reference to truths already known, and the truth of these laws is proved by the fact that it is always possible to descend through them from conceptional, back to perceptional reality, from the higher to the lower levels of consciousness.

The formulation of physical laws is a more complicated process. A

certain phenomenon is observed, e.g. that iron expands when heated, a theory is formed of causal connection between the application of heat and the expansion, experiments are made to test the truth of this theory, and, the universality of the phenomenon being ascertained, a physical law is formulated accordingly.

By thus establishing physical laws, further truths may be discovered and more laws formulated by reference to the laws already ascertained, all reasoning being, of course, subject to the laws of Logic. To " explain " a phenomenon simply means referring it to a law, and it should always be borne in mind that the law merely supplies the explanation, not the cause of a phenomenon.

Thus we find that the highest function of consciousness, reasoning,

is but an extension of the lower functions, and therefore the same test must be applied throughout, namely, consistency. It should be unnecessary to illustrate this further in detail, it being obvious that since the mental functions, from the lowest to the highest, are so closely interwoven that only an expert psychologist can separate them by analysis, they form a connected whole, the expression of which is experience. Hence we can now speak generally of consistency of experience as the test of truth, the width of experience—and therefore of truth—increasing with the ascent from lower to higher levels of consciousness, from the individual to the universal.

The same test is, of course, applied to prove the truth of historical events of the past with this difference only,

that here we are dealing not with personally observed, but with recorded phenomena which must be brought into a coherent chain, linking them up with present experience.

Since we have no means of testing such events by personal observation, we must depend entirely upon the testimony of others, and thus the question arises of the trustworthiness of these. By a trustworthy witness we mean one whose testimony is likely to be true, i.e. one who is a good observer and a good recorder of what he has observed. Thus his reliability may be tested by reference to (1) himself, (2) his book, the latter being tested by external and internal evidence. We try to ascertain whether the writer's character was such as to warrant his general reliability, whether he was likely to have had

a good knowledge of the events recorded, how far he was an eye-witness or depended on the testimony of others, and, in the latter case, how far such testimony may be regarded as trustworthy. Further, was he credulous, or was he capable of sifting his sources of information? These and other questions to be examined to test the personal reliability of the historian may be resolved into the question as to the consistency of the testimony about him. If this is consistently in favour of his reliability, we have good ground for trusting him, otherwise not.

Secondly, we must consider his book by external and internal evidence. Do we have consistent testimony as to its general trustworthiness? Is the record consistent throughout (i.e. containing no self-

contradictions), and is it consistent with the rest of history? These and similar questions must be answered in the affirmative, if the record is to be regarded as true; if they cannot be thus answered, the record must be rejected or regarded as doubtful.

The ultimate test, therefore, in this as in all other investigations, is consistency, internal and external.

Thus, in whatever way we look at truth—individual or universal, abstract or concrete, past or present—we reach the same conclusion, namely, that consistency is the one universal test for truth, and truth must therefore be defined as that which is in accordance with consistency of experience.

It follows then that there is no criterion for knowing whether we have, at any point, arrived at ultimate or absolute truth. We have

spoken of "higher" and "lower" reality, of "wider" and "narrower" experience, but these terms clearly imply that human knowledge is only, and can only be, *relative*. Hence we must be satisfied with gradual approximation towards ultimate truth, necessitating occasional re-adjustments of the elements of experience. Thus at one time it was believed that the sun moved round the earth, and the rest of experience was fitted in accordingly; with further astronomical discoveries came the necessity for re-adjustment, and we cannot be certain whether further discoveries may not lead to still further re-adjustments. Any system must therefore be conditioned by the possibility of extended knowledge; as our experience is relative, our conception of truth must be correspondingly relative, i.e. the wider

the experience, the higher the truth. Consistency of experience—as far as experience goes—must always remain the sole criterion of truth; no other test is possible, since it is impossible for human thought to pass beyond human experience.

II. THE BASIS OF TRUTH: GOD.

WE arrive at truth by establishing consistency of experience, truth being that which is consistent with experience; but now the question arises how far such consistency is attainable.

Each sense, taken by itself, is found to be unreliable; how then can the senses, taken in conjunction, bring us any nearer to truth? Five unreliable witnesses can hardly be said to be of more use than one. Memory is necessary for the identification of percepts, but our memory is notoriously unreliable. The higher levels of consciousness are found to be merely an extension of the lower

levels; hence if the latter are unreliable, the former must be so even to a greater extent. As the same is the case with each individual, not only will the establishment of individual, but also of universal truth become an unreliable process. All reasoning proceeds according to laws, but is the establishment of these laws a valid process? We observe that a certain phenomenon, A, is closely connected with another phenomenon, B; we find that such is the connection in all cases observed, but is it warrantable to pass from "all cases observed" to "all cases?" Surely it is against the most elementary forms of reasoning to pass from "some" to "all," however many instances are included in "some."

Some A are B
∴ All A are B

is an impossible logical conclusion; and yet that is exactly what is done when laws of science are formulated. An act of faith is implied, viz. faith in universal regularity; we are constantly acting according to this faith, but the question is whether it is justified. It will easily be seen that if it is not justified, all reasoning, all thought, will be chaotic, since it will be impossible to go beyond momentary truth.

Two possibilities are now open to us: either we must frankly admit that no valid knowledge is possible beyond disconnected individual sensations, or else we must find the missing element that is necessary for the establishment of consistency of experience, the guarantee for universal regularity. The former alternative would involve mental despair and purposeless life; so it is not to be

resorted to, unless the latter is found impossible. The chief difficulty lies in passing from the individual to the universal, from the relative to the absolute; if only we could start from the absolute, there would seem to be no difficulty in passing from the absolute to the relative.

We cannot, however, do that, but it is possible to *infer* the absolute from the relative, as Herbert Spencer does in his "First Principles." He shows how all phenomena are relative, and can only be relative, and from this fact he draws the conclusion that there must be an absolute Being or Power, of which all natural phenomena are but manifestations, the noumenon of the phenomena. This Being he terms the "Great Unknowable," but is here guilty of self-contradiction, since the Being cannot be unknowable if He is

known to be great, as well as absolute. It is, of course, impossible for us to form an *adequate* idea of this Being, but it is quite possible, without that, to form some idea, capable of entering into connection with the rest of experience. We cannot form any adequate ideas of space, time, infinity, even, as Spencer shows, of the very sphere we inhabit; yet we give them symbolic expression, and thus they enter our consciousness as symbolic ideas, but none the less valid links in consecutive and consistent experience. No adequate ideas can be formed of such values as $\sqrt{3}$, $\sqrt{-4}$, or $5 \div 0$, yet the mathematician uses them without any detriment to the valid establishment of mathematical truths. Strictly speaking, such values are "unknowable," but they cannot be excluded from mathematics. It is impossible

for us to get rid of anthropomorphic ideas of the "Power behind the phenomena," but though our ideas are inexact, the Power exists all the same.

If we then—being a little more venturesome than Spencer — posit this Power as the One Author, Designer, and Upholder of everything, in other words, God, we have got the hitherto missing element through which consistency of experience is obtainable, and with this valid establishment of partial truth and valid approximation to ultimate truth.

As indicated above, if we are to avoid mental chaos, an act of faith is necessitated throughout, faith in the general trustworthiness of experience; but this faith can only be justified if we regard the whole universe as emanating from One God. As He is One, we are warranted in

expecting unity throughout the universe, the non-material as well as the material; as He is the One Author, Designer, and Upholder of everything, we are warranted in regarding everything as made for a definite purpose, since otherwise there would be no design. The fact that we may not always discover the design does not affect the argument in the least.

Man is made for a definite purpose; therefore his functions—bodily and mental—must be normally reliable. Each sense, taken by itself, is unreliable, but experience shows, and psychometry proves, that normally (1) each sense is more reliable than unreliable, (2) the senses are not equally unreliable, (3) any particular sense is not equally unreliable at all times, and (4) the unreliability differs in differ-

ent individuals. Hence, when once the general reliability of nature is guaranteed, it becomes possible to rectify the deficiencies of one sense by reference to the other senses and to other persons, and thus form valid percepts. Though unreliability is found throughout all levels of consciousness, yet, taking all the elements as a whole, general trustworthiness can be safely looked for, and any defect checked by comparing our experience with that of other normal persons. But such general trustworthiness would be unjustifiable apart from belief in God.

The universe is made for a definite purpose; therefore the working of nature must be reliable, and thus universal regularity becomes established on a firm foundation, and attainment of truth becomes possible. We have, then, a guar-

antee for uniformity throughout nature, the same phenomena constantly occurring under the same causal connections, and we are justified under certain circumstances (duly observing Stuart Mill's Canons), in arguing from the particular to the universal and thus formulating Laws of Nature. Iron will always expand in exact proportion to the degree of heat applied, energy will always be transmitted in other forms of equal value, gold will always be of the same specific gravity, the heavenly bodies will always move with such accuracy that eclipses can be predicted with a never-failing certainty. The farmer sows his seed year by year with full assurance of proportionate harvest under normal circumstances, the navigating officer sets his course knowing that the ship will reach its

destination in accordance with his calculations, and we all lay plans for the future, firmly believing that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22). Each new scientific discovery, each new natural law established, each progress made in philosophy—they all contribute to our fuller realisation of the unity of nature, to our fuller understanding of God, to our further progress towards the attainment of ultimate truth. Posit God, and consistency becomes possible; deny God, and everything is chaos. The Atheist is not justified in appealing to laws of nature, to laws of Logic, even to his own thoughts; all he can say as a consistent Atheist is: "I know nothing, and I am not even sure of

that." In other words, denial of God leads to pure nescience, and the old psalmist proved himself to be a good philosopher, as well as a man of experience, when he said: "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. xiv. 1). Only the fool thinks he can reason without assuming the existence of God; the philosopher sees the logical necessity of God.

As to the Agnostic, we agree with him in regarding God as unknowable, in the sense that it is impossible to have any *adequate* notion of God; but we must differ from him when he asserts that we cannot know anything about God; for we cannot know that God exists, unless we know something about Him.

Granted that God is Absolute, it follows that He is Infinite; for what

is absolute cannot be limited by anything. And for the same reason, He must be Perfect, since imperfection implies limitation. As all phenomena are manifestations of Him,* He must be Personal, since consciousness of personality is one of these manifestations. It follows, then, that He is Omniscient, as well as Omnipotent and Omnipresent. For the same reason He is perfect Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, towards which ideals (i.e. towards Himself), He, in His infinite purpose, leads us through the guiding and regulating influence of the human spirit.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. v. 8), i.e. the more the human spirit is cleansed from imperfections, the

* i.e. *normal* phenomena; evil is *abnormal;* see III., 2.

more unrestricted will its function be, the more direct will be our approximation to God, till at last, freed from all imperfections, we shall "see Him as He is" (I. Jn. iii. 2). This is the Beatific Vision, attainable—but not here on earth. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly;* but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known" (I. Cor. xiii. 9—12). These are the words of a great philosopher, addressing people interested in philosophy;

* Literally: "enigmatically."

modern philosophers use conciser and less allegorical language, but the truth of the statement remains the same.

Our knowledge is partial and relative, but under the regulating influence of the human spirit, co-operating with the Holy Spirit, it is guided towards the Absolute, i.e. towards God, Who is thus the goal, as well as the foundation, of all true knowledge.

With God as the basis it is, as we have seen, possible to arrange the elements of experience in a coherent system; it now remains to be seen whether this theistic construction is consistent throughout.

III. THEISTIC PROBLEMS.

1. *Theistic proofs.*

BELIEF in God is seen to be the basis of truth. Individual truth is, of course, to a certain extent, possible apart from any such belief, but such truth is only of value to the individual. We are not, however, anchorites, but living in the closest touch with other individuals, and it is therefore necessary to generalize truth. Such generalization is only possible if we have full guarantee for the general trustworthiness of nature, and, as we have seen, no other guarantee is possible but God Himself. Experience points to uniformity in all cases brought under observa-

tion, but — unless we assume the existence of God—we have no logical right to argue from limited experience of uniformity in the past to universal uniformity in the past, as well as in the future. Nor have we even any right to argue that our experience of uniformity makes universal uniformity probable, since probability is only constituted through presupposed uniformity. All such arguing really amounts to deducing an A-proposition from an I-proposition, which is a logical impossibility.

It is evident, then, that there cannot be any *a posteriori* proofs of the existence of God, since any such proofs must involve a *petitio principii*. The two usual proofs are the cosmological and the teleological, the former based on causality, the latter on design. "Everything

has a cause; hence there must be a first cause"—such is the cosmological argument, put briefly. A contradiction in terms is at once apparent here, since the first cause must be uncaused, and thus the proposition is contradicted. But apart from that, the point is how to prove that everything has a cause. As far as our experience goes, it has, but our experience is limited, and we cannot argue from "some things" to "everything." Besides, many phenomena may be traced back to human will; if human will is caused (determined) there can be no free will and thus no moral responsibility, which is inconsistent with experience; if it is uncaused, the result will be a multitude of "first causes" instead of one. The solution of the dilemma is, of course, as will be seen later, that God is the Author of the free-

dom of human will, but this does not follow from the cosmological argument.

To argue from design to a Designer is likewise impossible. It is true that the more nature is studied, the more we discover design in everything, but this very notion of design presupposes the idea of a designer, and thus the argument becomes a *petitio principii*. Besides, if there is to be One Designer, there must be universal design throughout nature, but here again we cannot argue from our limited human experience to universality.

A further objection against these two proofs lies in the fact that they do not lead to the necessity of an Infinite God. Infinity of the universe cannot be proved; hence there is no *a posteriori* necessity for regarding its Author as infinite. To argue

from the infinity of space to the infinity of the universe is nonsense, since empty space is nothing but a form of thought. We cannot conceive of infinity in any other form than that of extension; hence it is also impossible to associate any idea with that of infinity of spirit, since spirit is without extension. When we speak of the Infinity of God, we mean that He is without any limitation whatsoever, and therefore Perfection, but such perfection does not necessarily follow from the above arguments.

Since belief in God is the very basis of all true reasoning, *a priori* proofs of His existence must be equally impossible; but, as shown above, we arrive at the necessity for positing God by a combination of *a posteriori* and *a priori* reasoning. The fact—fully explained by

Spencer—that all our experience is relative implies the necessity for the existence of the Absolute, since the two are correlative terms, and it is easily seen that the limitation of human experience does not in any way interfere with the validity of this argument. Then by means of the cosmological and teleological arguments in conjunction with divers ontological considerations, too complicated to explain here, we are able to get some idea—inadequate, but valid—of the nature of the Absolute as the One Author, Designer, and Upholder of everything. The existence of God being posited, we have the necessary guarantee for uniformity; and then the usual proofs bring out clearly the design of the Designer, the power of the Omnipotent, the wisdom of the Omniscient. By them-

selves they converge towards God, but fail to reach God; in connection with the necessity for positing an Absolute Being as the "Power behind the phenomena," they make the existence of God a mathematical certainty, and consistency of experience becomes attainable throughout.

This process is not a *petitio principii,* but may be compared with positing a value for the x of an equation, and then examining whether this value satisfies the conditions of the equation. If it does, the value is true. But it may happen that there are two or more values which equally satisfy the conditions. Thus, if we have $x + \sqrt{4} = 10$ the value 8 for x would satisfy the conditions; but so would 12, since $\sqrt{4}$ may be both $+2$ and -2. This raises the question whether we might not posit some

basis of truth other than God, which would equally well satisfy the requirements of consciousness. But as the basis must be absolute, and as no valid reasoning is possible without this absolute basis, it follows that there cannot be any other. There cannot be two absolute bases.

With God as the foundation, we are then able to build up all the elements of experience into a consistent and coherent construction; it is valid because it is consistent, and as it is valid, our belief in God is firmly established. It is like constructing a foundation, building a house on the foundation, and then proving the firmness of the foundation from the stability of the house.

As briefly indicated in our last chapter, the Attributes of God may then be deduced from the fact that He is the Absolute Power of which

all phenomena—material and non-material—are manifestations; the exact nature, however, of these Attributes as well as several considerations in connection with their combination and mutual relation, must be referred to the Philosophy of Theism.

2. *The origin of evil.*

Though our mental functions must be regarded as generally reliable, yet the unreliability which actually exists will have to be accounted for. No sense, taken by itself, is wholly reliable, our memory is unreliable, our reasoning often leads us astray. Our bodies are wonderfully well designed machines, but functional disorders frequently arise, interfering with the smooth working of the machinery. The function of the spirit is to guide the

soul towards the ideals of goodness, beauty, and truth, but the soul is often seen to deviate from the road towards this three-fold goal, and the result is sin, disharmony, and falsehood. But if there is a perfect Being who is the Author, Designer, and Upholder of everything, how is it possible for any imperfections to exist? These disorders cannot be manifestations of God, since God is perfect; but then, whence do they arise? This is the old, old question which has puzzled innumerable philosophers throughout all ages: πόθεν ἡ κακία, the question of the origin of evil. Inconsistency seems to be entering into our construction, and if it does enter, the whole construction will collapse.

The problem, however, though difficult, is not insolvable, the difficulty chiefly arising from our inade-

quate notion of God. In Zoroastrianism a solution of the problem is attempted by positing a good spirit, Ormuzd, as the source of all that is good, and an evil spirit, Ahriman, as the source of all that is evil, the two being always in conflict. This dualism is also found, to a certain extent, in later Judaism, and even in popular forms of Christianity in the notion of two conflicting beings, God and the devil; and when, in addition, the devil is regarded as having been created as such by God, or when evil is regarded as an entity created by God, we cannot wonder if the minds of some people are puzzled by the idea of God as the Author of evil.

It is, of course, impossible to regard the devil as having been created as such by God; but it is equally impossible to regard the

devil as having existed from eternity in eternal conflict with God. If there were two such powers in conflict from eternity, either they must be equally powerful or unequally powerful. In the latter case, if God were stronger than the devil, the devil would have been conquered; if the devil were stronger than God, God would have been conquered; therefore, as both exist, they cannot be regarded as unequally powerful. Are they then equally powerful? If good and evil were equally distributed throughout the universe, such construction might be possible; but, as a matter of fact, we find throughout the universe order prevailing over chaos, reliability over unreliability, truth over falsehood, virtue over vice; in other words, perfection is seen to be the normal, imperfection the abnormal state.

Disease, mental unreliability, sin, are always—and rightly—regarded as deviations from an unvarying norm of perfection, mental as well as material.

Hence there cannot be two ultimate sources, mutually antagonistic, but there appears to be a force constantly opposing God and interfering with His work. If, however, God is absolute, how can such a force exist? If He is omnipotent, how is it possible in any way to interfere with His power?

It is possible, if He Himself permits such interference. A ruler who has absolute power over his subjects may, for purposes of his own, of his own free will, as an act of grace, grant his subjects liberty to obey him or disobey him just as they like; his inherent absolute power, however, remains the

same, since at any time he might, if he so willed, withdraw this liberty. Supposing he says: "I do not wish my subjects to obey me by command, but only if they themselves clearly see the advantage of such obedience, or yield me obedience as a result of their love for me," such decision of his is in no way detrimental to his absolute power. The concession is his to give, his to withdraw if he thinks fit.

In the same way it pleased the Omnipotent to grant to angels and men a free will, by the exercise of which they are enabled to obey or disobey Him according to their own free choice, and thus sin becomes possible. The devil was created by God, not, however, as devil, but as a holy angel. By revelation we are acquainted with his history:—He was originally good, but fell through

pride, and thus by the exercise of his own free will, Lucifer became Satan.

God allows His active omnipotence to be limited by man's free will, but His potential omnipotence remains unaltered, and must remain unaltered, since He is Absolute. He might, at any time, annihilate man, or, by withdrawing the human spirit, reduce man to the level of the lower animals. Such degradation frequently takes place by man's own free choice—it is possible for man himself to "quench the spirit" (I. Thess. v. 19). God might also, at any time, annihilate the devil and his angels; hence there is no conflict, as far as God is concerned, but for reasons, fully accounted for in Theology, He allows the devil to exist. The devil tempts man, but only as far as God permits him.

This is poetically described in the Book of Job, where we find Satan, still one of the "Sons of God," tempting man by God's special permission. The spirit of antagonism to God is, however, already apparent. The limitation of God's omnipotence is due to God Himself; but as long as God retains the power of suspending such limitation, He remains inherently omnipotent. Energy retains its full physical value, even if it be suspended or potential energy.

We used the parable of a ruler with absolute power over his subjects simply to illustrate the above fact, but—as is the case with most parables—the analogy is only applicable to the point in question. Man can obey or disobey God's will as he likes, but here his liberty ends. As he is rewarded for his obedience,

so he is punished for his disobedience. God, however, in His infinite mercy, pardons sin and restores the sinner to grace, if the sinner avails himself of the means of grace appointed by God. Hence sin, followed by repentance and confession on man's part, and absolution on God's part, may be a means of quickening man's spiritual life by making him realise the heinousness of sin, the love of God, and the sinner's dependance on the grace of God. Here we see one of the reasons why God permits the devil to tempt man. And further:—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (Jas. i. 12).

Like man, the lower animals have, as far as we can see, free will;

but as they have no spirit to direct their will towards an ideal, sin against God is, in their case, an impossibility. The same is the case with children, as long as their spiritual life remains undeveloped. Physical nature, however, is without free will; hence the heavenly bodies, the winds and the waves, all the forces of nature must act according to God's eternal decree—"He hath made a decree which none shall transgress" (Ps. cxlviii. 6). No deviation from natural law is possible, only eternal uniformity; God's own machine cannot go wrong.

But as for the intricate piece of machinery which forms the human body, the case is different. The functions of the bodily organs are, to a very great extent, controlled by man himself; he can stop them altogether by committing suicide,

he can impair them in different ways and cause them to be damaged through neglect, undue exposure, and overwork. If he demands an excessive amount of work from his eyes, it follows that his sight will be impaired, and therefore become unreliable, and similarly the other senses and the other organs may suffer through man's own fault. As the same applies to the mind, this consideration explains the existence of bodily and mental imperfections. It should also be borne in mind that there is a close connection between disease and sin. And quite apart from imperfections and evil through man's own fault, it should be remembered that man is not perfect; hence his limited knowledge in many cases leads to evil. This imperfection does not, however, militate against the perfection of God, since

it pleased God to make man, after he had lost his original perfection through the Fall, *potentially* perfect, i.e. God has given man the means of becoming perfect. Similarly with nature as a whole, evolution is always tending in the direction of ultimate perfection.

It is easily seen that if man can interfere with his own bodily and mental functions, he can also interfere with the functions of other individuals; he can damage his own sight, he can also damage the sight of others, he can commit suicide, he can also commit murder, he can sin himself, he can also lead others into sin. Thus in cases where imperfections arise which are not caused by oneself, it may often be possible to trace them to the agency of other human beings or of evil angels. But supposing they are

caused through no human or angelic agency, as e.g. when a man is blinded by a flash of lightning, does not this imply that the machinery of the universe is faulty, since one part of the machinery (the lightning), can clash with another part (the human eye), and destroy its functions? The eye is protected in many ways by the eyebrows, eyelids, etc., why, then, is it not fully protected?

We have referred to the agency of evil angels, but we are ignorant of the full scope of their power; we do not know, e.g., how far they are able to use the forces of nature for their own purposes. If we knew, many points, now apparently inexplicable, might become plain. Thus the whole problem of "innocent" suffering and sorrow must at present be left as one of the problems of

theistic philosophy. Many attempts have been made to solve it, but none are wholly satisfactory. All it is possible to say is that such is God's will, and as we cannot fully understand God, His will must remain inscrutable. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" (Rom. xi. 33).

We can only know His will in so far as it has pleased Him to reveal it to us; beyond that, everything is merely conjecture. Ultimate truth cannot be reached under the present circumstances of human life; problems must remain, and it is well to keep such problems open to be re-examined as human knowledge and revelation advances. The existence

of problems, however, does not in any way interfere with the valid establishment of consistency of experience.

3. *Miracles.*

We stated above that "all the forces of nature must act according to God's eternal decree," and that "no deviation from natural law is possible"; but it is, of course, possible for angels and men to make use of these forces against God's will, in as far as they are controllable by angels and men. Electricity, e.g., acts according to fixed laws, but these laws may be used by man for the purpose of sin, though they cannot be changed by man. God, however, can change the laws of nature, if He so wills, since He is their sole Author, and there appear to be records of such

changes having actually taken place.

This raises the question of miracles; and the problem we have got to consider here is this:—Granted that laws of nature have been altered at certain times, they may be altered again at any time, and our trust in nature, the foundation of all scientific knowledge, would then be seriously shaken.

It would, if such alterations were of frequent occurrence, but miracles, to be rightly regarded as miracles, must be *exceptional,* in which case their occurrence does not militate against the general trustworthiness of nature. Consistency is possible in spite of *exceptional* inconsistencies. The greatest mathematicians sometimes make miscalculations, our greatest friends sometimes fail us, the greatest saints sometimes sin; but as long as such inconsist-

ency is exceptional our trust in them is not shaken.

Each record of a miracle must be examined on its own merits before generalization is possible, but such examination can never be entirely satisfactory, since (1) the evidence of most of the miracles on record is lacking in such details as would satisfy a scientific investigator, (2) owing to the nature of miracles experiment is impossible, and (3) our knowledge of nature—and especially our knowledge of the interaction between mind and matter—is so limited that it is impossible to decide, in any given case, how far a phenomenon is due to any temporary alteration of certain laws of nature, physical or psychical.

If God were merely the Author and Designer of nature, and not its Upholder, as the Deists believe, i.e.

if He had limited His omnipotence so as never to interfere with His machinery when once He had set it going, miracles would, of course, be *a priori* impossible; but such a view of God is not maintainable. If, however, God's omnipotence is constantly immanent in nature, so that He can alter His own laws whenever He thinks fit, miracles become *a priori* possible, and even probable. This accords with the metaphysical construction already arrived at, since we posited God not only as the Author and Designer, but also as the Upholder of all that exists, i.e. God is not separated from the universe, but is immanent in the universe, controlling, moving, and regulating everything by the mere fiat of His will, with the sole self-imposed limitation mentioned above, viz. the free will of men and angels.

Miracles, then, do not in any way interfere with the validity of our construction with God as its alpha and omega, its foundation and ultimate goal, but, on the contrary, just as the discovery of natural laws and final causes strengthens our belief in God as the Author and Designer of the universe, so miracles strengthen our belief in Him as the permanent Upholder of the universe. It is questionable whether miracles can be scientifically proved and after that remain miracles according to scientific terminology—that depends on the definition of a miracle—but miracles, whether as "wonders" or "signs," or temporary alterations in the laws of nature, are not only *a priori* possible, or even highly probable, but are inseparable from true religion, and true religion is, as will

be pointed out later, a necessary element of consistent experience. And further:—If God is immanent in nature, the natural and super-natural are not, as is generally supposed, contrary terms, but the former merges into the latter through infinite gradations, so that it is impossible to say where the former ceases and the latter begins.

We are dealing with the question of abstract truth, not with the truth of any particular historical event; hence our investigation must be limited to this question:—Would the occurrence of miracles prevent the possibility of establishing consistency of experience throughout? As already shown, the answer is in the negative, on the supposition that God is immanent in nature. If, on the other hand, God is entirely

separated from nature, miracles become *a priori* impossible.

4. *Creation.*

On philosophical grounds we posit God as the Author, the ultimate source of the universe, but philosophy alone is unable to give us much guidance as to the *modus operandi* of creation. Here is one of the problems still unsolved, but a problem which may possibly approach solution with the progress of science.

Thus we know now that the formation of the earth has been a gradual process, lasting millions of years, that life only appeared at a comparatively late period, that species are due to evolution, and that man is developed from the lower animals. This agrees with Gen. ii. 7, where it is stated that man was formed out

of already existing matter, and differentiated from the rest of created beings by the addition of spirit. The work of creation is still incomplete; the machinery of nature is "very good" as far as it is developed, but the whole nature is subject to the laws of evolution, being thus guided towards perfection. God cannot be the author of any imperfection, but potential perfection—involving temporary incompleteness—is in no way inconsistent with the perfection of God.

Thus notions of creation prior to these scientific discoveries, must now be re-adjusted accordingly, i.e. creation must be regarded as a continuous activity stretching over immense periods of time, and still being continued in evolution.

The question then arises whether matter came into existence at a

definite time millions of years ago, or whether it has existed from eternity. The latter would seem more in accordance with our views of God, since it is impossible to conceive of God as inactive at any time. If matter had a beginning, God must have been inactive, as far as His creative activity is concerned, before that time, which seems inconceivable. To say that there was no time before the existence of matter is mere quibbling, and in reality amounts to the same thing.

Another difficulty is, that if God existed first alone and then together with or immanent in the universe, He would seem to have changed, but God cannot change, since He is Absolute. Evolutionary development, however, does not involve any change in God, since such development must have existed potentially

in matter from the beginning (if there was a beginning), or from eternity.

Such are some of the problems in connection with creation; we must leave them unsolved, since we have at present no sufficient data for their solution. This, however, does not interfere with the stability of our construction, only we get some idea as to where its limits are to be found. It seems easier to conceive of eternal creation than of creation in time, but it is impossible simply by means of philosophy to decide definitely between the two views. Philosophy alone would probably favour the view of eternal creation, but—as will be seen later—religion must be regarded as an integral element of truth, and thus the question becomes complicated, since religion would seem to

favour the view of creation in time, *ex nihilo*. The problem must be left open.

IV. GOD AND THE UNIVERSE:

TRANSCENDENT IMMANENCE.

OUR construction is found to be of satisfactory stability throughout, founded, as it is, on belief in God, and reaching, without any gaps, without any inconsistencies, through all the levels of individual and general experience as far as human thought will go; at the same time, since ultimate truth cannot be reached under the present circumstances of human life, the structure is not finished on the top, and is therefore capable of being heightened with the gradual increase of knowledge, and possibly further strengthened by minor readjustments. Its foundation is be-

lief in God, its goal is ultimate truth, God Himself. We are dealing with one aspect of the structure, viz. truth, but it should always be borne in mind that there are also the two other aspects of beauty and goodness, the foundation and the goal being, however, the same. The work of completing the structure is still going on; the architect is God, the builder is the human spirit, working under the direction of God and guiding and directing the activities of numerous workers, the functions of the soul. A stone is truly laid if it fits in with the rest of the structure—an idea is true if it fits in with the rest of experience.

Two points, however, must be further examined, viz. the relation between (1) God and the universe, and (2) God and the individual; the former is fully dealt with in

Philosophy of Theism, the latter in Theology.

How, then, is God related to the universe?

According to Deism, God having once created the universe and set the machinery going, ceased to have any connection with it; hence it moves and develops according to eternally determined laws, such movement and development being eternal, since there is no retarding force. As pointed out above, miracles would be impossible according to this view, but there are more serious objections:—

(1). All phenomena are seen to be relative, i.e. "the world is no self-centred reality, independent of God, but is simply the form in which Divine purpose realizes itself" (Bowne: *Philosophy of Theism*). God is the noumenon of

the phenomena, but the noumenon and the phenomena cannot be regarded as separate entities. Given a phenomenon, we can always ask:—the phenomenon of what?

(2). Deism implies creation as a finished act, after which act God is regarded as inactive; but (besides the difficulties in connection with finite creation), if God is inactive, there is no logical necessity for His existence, since inactivity would be tantamount to non-existence; but as God is infinite, He cannot cease to exist.

(3). Motion in the absence of a moving force is inconceivable; hence perpetual motion in the absence of retarding force is a hypothesis which can only become a certainty on the supposition of God's constant connection with nature.

(4). If all the phenomena,

material and non-material, are unchangeably determined from the time of creation (which Deism would seem to imply), man cannot possess free will, in which case he cannot be responsible for his actions, and thus all moral distinction between good and evil ceases.

(5). The purpose of human life can only be regarded as gradual approximation towards perfection, i.e. God; but if God is separated from the universe, how is the "gap" between God and the universe to be bridged over?

We have tested Deism by the criterion for truth, viz. consistency, and as it is found to be inconsistent, it cannot be true, and must therefore be rejected. Consistency of experience is only obtainable if God is regarded as permanently related to nature; hence we find a theory

diametrically opposed to Deism, viz. Pantheism.

Pantheism identifies God with the universe:—God is everything, and everything is God. This view of God is found in innumerable forms throughout the history of philosophy, in the Brahma of the Vedas, in Plato's τὸ ὄν, in the *anima mundi* of Stoicism, in Spinoza's One Substance, *causa sui,* the *natura naturans* of which nature, the *natura naturata,* is but an expression. It is a view which may lead to mysticism, as in Neo-Platonism, to intense subjective religion, as in Spinoza, or become tantamount to Atheism. It is prevalent in poetry and in popular forms of self-invented "religion," especially amongst the educated, and it is greatly attractive to superficial

thinkers. It avoids the chaos of Atheism, the uncertainty of Agnosticism, the crassness of Materialism and the irreligion of Deism, but like Deism, it cannot stand the test of consistency. Thus:—

(1). If God is everything and everything is God, God does not exist as an individual substance, and we may just as well say that there is no God.

(2). The relation between God and the universe is, as shown above, the relation between the absolute and the relative; but if God is identified with the universe, there cannot be any distinction between absolute and relative.

(3). Perpetual motion is as inconceivable on the identification of God with the universe as on the theory of Deism, since it is impos-

sible to identify the moving force with the motion.

(4). If everything is God, man is God. All his actions must therefore be Divine, and the distinction between good and evil ceases. For the same reason no improvement, no approximation towards perfection, is conceivable. If everything is God, everything must be perfect.

(5). If everything is God, nothing can exist which is imperfect; hence, on the theory of Pantheism, inconsistency is inconceivable, since it is an imperfection, and thus all distinction between truth and falsehood ceases.

(6). Since man is already Divine, there can be no goal, no ultimate destiny as the object of his aspirations, and therefore no purpose of life. But this is against all spiritual

experience, and would lead to spiritual and mental despair.

(7). If evolution is more than a merely accidental rearrangement of atoms, it must be a progression, but a progression towards what? If nature is Divine, how is any progression possible? God cannot progress.

Thus Pantheism is seen to be inconsistent, as well as Deism, and therefore untrue. This, however, does not imply that these two theories are wholly false; as we have seen, each contains an element of truth, but not the whole truth. God must be immanent in nature, but at the same time a distinct Person—*rationalis naturæ individua substantia* (Boetius; *vide* St. Thom. Aquin. Summa I. 29, 1), i.e., He must be transcendent as well as immanent, and this combination of

the true elements of Deism and Pantheism must be the true expression of God's relation to the universe, with the qualification, of course, that no words can adequately express the truth of God, since God is Ultimate Truth.

V. GOD AND MAN:

CHRISTIANITY.

WE have considered God's relation to the universe as a whole, and shall now proceed to consider His relation to the individual human being. As man is a person—an individual substance of rational nature—with free will, the relationship becomes mutual, i.e. we can speak of (1) God's relation to man, and (2) man's relation to God, the former being static, since God is unchangeable, the latter depending on the free will of the individual. This mutual relationship between God and man finds expression in religion. Numerous definitions have been given of religion, covering all

forms of religion from the lowest to the highest, but so far no satisfactory definition has been agreed upon by philosophers. The common element, however, in all forms of religion seems to be a feeling of dependence on a Higher Power, giving itself expression in worship and morality, and the definition of religion—if a satisfactory definition is possible—should be shaped accordingly. Our task, however, in this connection is simply to examine whether religion is a valid element of experience (i.e. consistent with the rest of experience), and if so, which form of religion, if any, is consistent, and therefore true.

The validity of religion follows from what was stated in the last chapter. On the theory of Deism, no consistent religion is possible, since there is no connection between

God and the universe, and therefore no connection between God and man. Neither is consistent religion possible on the theory of Pantheism, since man himself is regarded as Divine, the pantheistic so-called religion being merely mystic self-contemplation. But when we regard God as immanent and transcendent, He is neither identified with nor separated from the universe, and consequently there must be a relationship between God and man, since man is part of the universe. As a matter of fact, we find that all reasoning human beings, from the most primitive to the most highly civilized, are conscious of such relationship, and find it entirely in accordance with the rest of experience. Atheists and Agnostics can, of course, be excluded as unreliable witnesses, since their

views are, as we have seen, inconsistent, and therefore false.

Having once posited God as the One Author, Designer, and Upholder of the universe, we may—as we have endeavoured to show—deduce the form of relationship existing between God and the universe, but we cannot thus, by mere reasoning, arrive at the truth of the relationship between God and man. We know that such relationship exists, but how are we to know what form it must take? The point is this, that here God's will acts on man's will which is free, whereas in the rest of the universe, everything must obey God's will. In the case of the material universe, "God spake, and it was done"; in the case of man, God speaks, and it is not always done, God having granted to man

entire freedom of will to obey or disobey as he chooses.

We are here especially concerned with the third department of spiritual function, namely, the guidance of the will towards the ideal of goodness; but what is meant by goodness? The obvious answer is: conformity of the human will with the Divine; but then the question arises, how we are to know the Divine Will. The usual idea is that we have an intuitive knowledge of God's Will through conscience, but conscience is, like all other mental functions, in itself unreliable, and, like these, wants training. A fully trained conscience is a fairly reliable guide, but how is the conscience to be trained? The answer is, that it should be trained by religious teachers in accordance with God's Will, and thus we come back to the

same point again: How are we to know God's Will? Nothing is more subjective than will; I cannot know another's will, unless he tells me, and nobody can know my will, unless I myself make it known. Similarly, if we are to know God's Will, it is necessary that He should reveal His Will to us by some means or other, i.e. the relationship of man with God cannot be deduced or invented by man, but must be revealed by God Himself; in other words, true religion must be based on Divine revelation.

Conversely, if God's Will were not revealed to man, there could be no ultimate distinction between good and evil; thus, as denial of God's existence leads to intellectual chaos, so denial of revelation leads to ethical chaos. Religion, therefore, is not only a valid, but a necessary

of religion. These cannot all be true, since they are mutually inconsistent; on the other hand, they cannot all be false, since the true revelation of God must be found somewhere; hence one form must be true, and the others false. By this we do not mean that the latter are wholly false; they all contain true elements mingled with false; yet they must be rejected, since the true revelation of God cannot contain any falsehood. Nor do we maintain that the true revelation contains the whole truth. It might, but it is not necessary that it should; we rather expect it to be formed in such a way as to be capable of expansion proportionate with the development of human intellect, although it must, of course, always be, in many points, beyond human intellect.

How are we, then, to find amongst the various forms of religion, the true form, or, we may say, the one true religion? Simply by applying the criterion of truth, consistency, and eliminating such religions as are inconsistent; the task is not as difficult as one might imagine, considering the great number of religions, past and present. Thus, as there can only be one God, all forms of Polytheism (e.g. Hinduism), are *ipso facto* rejected, also any dualistic religion, such as Zoroastrianism. Further, thanks to the science of the Comparative Study of Religions, we are now able to trace the evolution of religion, distinguishing "higher" from "lower" religions, and thus we can eliminate all lower religions or forms of religion.

We must then confine our investi-

gation to the highest religions, eliminating any that are found to be inconsistent. Thus Confucianism and Buddhism must be excluded, since they are agnostic, the former being chiefly a system of Ethics, the latter of Psychology. Some vague idea of God may be contained in Confucianism, but if so, it is probably pantheistic; Taoism, with which Confucianism is largely mingled, is certainly pantheistic. Buddhism is avowedly agnostic, perhaps even atheistic; thus in the Buddhist catechism by Subhádra Bhikshu, we read:—

> Question 94. "Has a God-Creator called the world into existence by his almighty will?
>
> No; there is no personal God-Creator, on whose mercy and good-will the universe is dependent. Everything owes its origin

and development to its own inherent vitalism, or, what comes to the same, its own will to live... The Buddhist utterly rejects the belief in a personal God. . . ."

Question 149. "Wherein does Buddhism essentially differ from other religions?

Buddhism teaches the reign of perfect goodness and wisdom without a personal God, continuance of individuality without an immortal soul, eternal happiness without a local heaven, the way of salvation without a vicarious Saviour, redemption worked out by each one himself without any prayers, sacrifices and penances, without the ministry of ordained priests, without the intercession of saints, without Divine mercy."

Besides, none of these religions claim Divine revelation as their

source; thus—as regards Buddhism—we find in the catechism quoted above:—

> Question 69. "What is the doctrine?
>
> It is the true way of salvation intuitively perceived and announced by the Buddha..... and recorded in the holy Scriptures."
>
> Question 75. "Do, then, these collections contain any Divine revelation?
>
> No; there are no Divine revelations. It is a groundless assumption, utterly rejected by Buddhism, that truth should be revealed by a God or an angel to a few inspired favourites."

The true religion must, as we have seen, be based on Divine revelation. Three religions explicitly make this claim, viz. Islam,

Judaism, and Christianity, and our investigation must therefore now be limited to these. According to Islam, God made His Will known through His prophet Mohammed, this revelation being embodied in the Koran. Thus we find in this religion a definite, recorded revelation, with definite rules of worship and general conduct, ultimate reward for virtue and punishment for vice, sacrifice, prayer, and a strong belief in one God as the ultimate source of the universe. Indeed, Islam arose—historically speaking—as a protest against Arabian polytheism, and the virulent opposition to Islam in the beginning of its career was mainly due to its attacks on polytheism.

There are, however, serious objections to this religion. Mohammed claimed to have received the Koran

from heaven (by instalments), but there is nothing to prove this claim, and no proof is attempted beyond an appeal to the alleged literary perfection of the Koran. Islam strongly appeals to the natural instincts of man, and it is the simplest of all religions; these facts—in conjunction with armed force — are sufficient to account for its wide extension.

As to internal evidence, the gross inaccuracies found in the Koran are wholly inconsistent with its alleged Divine origin. Thus the Virgin Mary is said to be the sister of Aaron, Solomon is prior to Adam, Satan and his angels were expelled from heaven because they refused to obey Adam, the Christians believe in a Trinity consisting of the Father, the Mother, and the Son, Gabriel is confused with the Holy

Spirit, Saul with Gideon. It seems quite clear that Mohammed had some superficial knowledge of the Bible, the Apocryphical Gospels, various Gnostic writings, and the Talmud, and then made his scraps of knowledge—unconsciously perhaps—into a vast jumble, most of the elements of which may be extricated and referred to their respective sources.

The Mohammedan conception of God, though strictly monotheistic, really amounts to Deism. Thus, a peculiar feature of Islam is fatalism, i.e. everything from man's minutest actions to his ultimate fate in paradise or hell is unchangeably foreordained by God; but this implies God's separation from the universe, and the objections against Deism are therefore applicable to Islam. If man's actions are foreordained,

free will does not exist, and moral responsibility ceases; why, then, are some rewarded in paradise, others punished in hell?

Another objection to Islam is that no provision is made for the interpretation of the Koran, the result being the rise of numerous sects, each claiming to hold the true faith; and besides, as the whole faith is contained in the Koran, no provision is made for the expansion and development of the faith which must always go hand-in-hand with the extension of human knowledge.

Islam must therefore be rejected as inconsistent, and we have now got to consider Judaism. Like Islam, Judaism is monotheistic, and claims to be based on Divine revelation, embodied in the Old Testament, but no one pretends that this collection of documents came down

from heaven, as the Koran is supposed to have done. Human writers are supposed to have recorded the Divine revelation; hence the human element is mingled with the Divine, and any historical and other inconsistencies are thus duly accounted for. Besides, the Old Testament embodies a progressive revelation in accordance with the development of human understanding, and thus we can trace (and better still, when Higher Criticism has succeeded in disentangling the documents and arranging them in chronological order), a gradual development of the idea of God from the crassest anthropomorphism to the highest spiritualism. Divine inspiration cannot, of course, be definitely proved from the Old Testament itself; all that can be said at this stage of investigation is that Juda-

ism in its highest development, as recorded in the Old Testament, contains nothing—apart from the purely human elements mentioned above—inconsistent with any alleged Divine origin.

But we meet with the same difficulty here as in the case of the Koran, viz. the want of provision for authoritative interpretation; hence different parties of Jews, and Rabbinical casuistry. Besides, as the Old Testament contains a progressive revelation, it is difficult to distinguish between the higher and the lower forms (it does not follow that the later writings contain the higher forms), and we have no infallible criterion for separating the human from the Divine element. Hence the Old Testament cannot be regarded as a safe guide to the Divine Will.

And further, even in what appears to be its highest form, Judaism does not pretend to be the final revelation; it is merely preparatory, paving the way for, and pointing forward to the Messiah, David's Son and David's Lord, the Son of God and the Son of Man, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, the Saviour who will crush the serpent's head, the Incarnate Logos. His religion must therefore be the one true religion, the one true revelation of God. Has this Messiah appeared, or will He appear at some future date? This is the point at issue between Judaism and Christianity, the latter identifying Jesus Christ with the expected Messiah, the former regarding Him as an impostor, and still waiting for the Messiah to come.

Either Jesus Christ is a consum-

mate deceiver or else He is what He claims to be, the true Revealer of God; there can be no other alternative. It must be left to theologians to examine either alternative in detail by means of our sole criterion for truth: consistency. Is His whole character consistent with that of an impostor? Is His teaching that of a mere religious fanatic, or is it sublime, fully consistent with His claim as God's special emissary? Such are some of the questions that have to be considered, but an unprejudiced study of His life and teaching makes the answers obvious. Apart from the Jews, none, whether Christians or not, will ever dare to assert that Jesus Christ was a false teacher; and if He was not, He must be God Incarnate—nothing less. Christian theologians agree that Jesus substantiated His claim,

and 1900 years of Christianity and the unanimous testimony of millions and millions of Christians throughout these ages confirm this claim. With the fall of Jerusalem, Judaism was doomed; in spite of the severest persecutions by the sword, the bitterest attacks by the pen, and acts of treachery by false disciples, Christianity stands triumphant as the one true religion, since it is the only religion which is self-consistent throughout and consistent with the rest of human experience.

VI. INCONSISTENT CHRISTIANITY:

PROTESTANTISM.

WE found that Christianity is the one true religion, the one true revelation of God to man, and therefore the one true path leading to Ultimate Truth. In the other religions that claim, implicitly or explicitly, to be based on Divine revelation, the difficulty is to prove the genuineness of the medium of revelation; not so in Christianity, since God Himself is the Revealer, the medium of revelation being the human nature which He assumed as the Incarnate Logos. "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave

thee this authority?" (Mt. xxi. 23) —this is a question which all religious teachers must face; only Jesus Christ could say: "All things are delivered unto me of the Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Mt. xi. 27).

But now we are confronted with the same difficulty as in the last chapter. We came to the conclusion that God must have revealed Himself to man, such revelation being found in religion, but as there are many forms of religion, we had to eliminate the false ones to arrive at the true one; in the same way, having come to the conclusion that Christianity is the one true religion, we find a multitude of different forms of Christianity, past and

present, and must therefore proceed, in the same way, to eliminate the false forms in order to arrive at the true form.

As human will is capable of rejecting God, it might be possible to argue that the true form of Christianity had—at some period or other—become extinct; but then it must have existed some time, and we might possibly find records of it, or by the comparative method deduce the true form from the existing and recorded false forms. To argue that the true form never existed is inconsistent with history. It is a historical fact that Christ was accepted by some as the true Revealer of God, and from His time onwards, we find Christianity as a continuous stream throughout history in various forms. It is *a priori* possible it may not be found amongst the

present forms, but it must be found somewhere. All the forms cannot be true, since they are mutually inconsistent; as we have seen, they cannot all be false; hence, one must be true, and the others false. Our task will then be to find this true form of Christianity—or rather, Christianity itself, since it seems a contradiction in terms to speak of false forms of Christianity.

Christianity must be the religion taught by Christ Himself; His teaching is found in the four Gospels, and thus the task would appear to present no difficulties, since true Christianity must be that which is in accordance with the Gospels. If, however, we are to base the Christian Faith solely on the Gospels, it will soon be found that such basis is lacking in sufficient stability. The general trustworthiness of the Gos-

pels as historical records can be established by historical methods, through external and internal evidence, but here we are met by the first difficulty, since such general historical trustworthiness is insufficient for our needs. Nothing less than *absolute certainty* as regards Christ's teaching will satisfy us. In all probability, Christ usually spoke in Aramaic, but—with a few unimportant exceptions — His words are recorded in the Gospels in Hellenistic Greek. Thus, probably, we do not have His exact words at all, but merely a translation, and what guarantee have we that this translation conveys the exact meaning of the original? We learn that even His most intimate friends often misunderstood Him; how then can we be sure of finding His true teaching in translations

written many years after His departure, especially when we consider that such translations are, in many instances, based merely on oral tradition? Besides, the question of the authorship of the Gospels enters here very largely. More reliability would naturally be attached to the Gospels if they were written by Christ's intimate friends than by others, but only the Fourth Gospel is supposed to have been written by an Apostle, viz. St. John. St. Matthew perhaps wrote a Gospel in Aramaic, but this is now lost. As for the Synoptic Gospels, the first is in all probability not written by St. Matthew the Apostle, and neither St. Mark nor St. Luke are known as intimate friends of Our Lord. St. John certainly was intimately acquainted with Christ, but there are eminent

theologians who doubt his authorship, and even if these be wrong, all are agreed that the Gospel was written towards the end of the first century; thus St. John would then be a very old man, and experience tells us that memories of very old men are far from reliable. As a matter of fact—apart from differences which may be otherwise accounted for—the Christ of St. John's Gospel seems different from the Christ of the Synoptists; His language, theme, claims, teaching and methods all seem different. Indeed, many conservative theologians hold that St. John does not give us Christ's words at all, but uses his own words as a vehicle for Christ's teaching, so that the words Christ is supposed to have uttered are really St. John's. This is not a fraud, but a somewhat primitive

device, common in ancient classical writers; the general meaning of Christ's teaching may in this way be conveyed to us, but not His actual words, not even a translation of His actual words.

On the other hand, there are some who argue that Christ sometimes—especially when in Jerusalem—did speak in Greek (it is clear that He must have known Greek), and that the author of the Fourth Gospel thus gives us the exact Greek words spoken by Our Lord, whereas in the Synoptists we have a translation of His Aramaic words, generally spoken in Galilee. This is a workable theory, but it cannot be proved, and the problem of the Synoptic records of His words remains the same; e.g. we have no means of deciding the exact form in which Christ taught the Lord's

Prayer (cf. Mt. vi. 9—13 and Luke xi. 2—4, the text of the latter being very doubtful; see Revised Version).

Even if we could be quite sure of having in the Gospels the exact import of Christ's words, there is the further difficulty of the right text. There are more than 1500 catalogued MSS. of the Gospels (apart from ca. 1000 lectionaries), but these all differ in details, and the problem of the true text (or the text nearest the original) is still unsolved. These variants are, it is true, of minor importance as far as doctrine is concerned, but they testify to the somewhat careless way in which the text has been transmitted, and certainly shake our trust in the identity between the text of the existing MSS. and that of the original MSS. And there are variants which cannot be said to be of

minor importance; e.g. according to the text favoured by the best critics there is not a word in any of the Gospels about Our Lord's Ascension.

But there are still more difficulties. Assuming that we have in the Gospels the true meaning of Our Lord's teaching, such teaching is found to be very scant, as well as very disconnected, hardly sufficient to build into a system of coherent Theology. Many important questions are left undecided, e.g. the true meaning of Christ's death, the true relation of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the fate of the soul between death and Judgment, the conditions of valid Sacraments, etc.; in fact, as far as we can see, Our Lord generally stated facts, but did not explain these facts. And the reason for this is obvious: as He

Himself stated, He left His teaching unfinished for the simple reason that His hearers would not have been able to grasp any further teaching (Jn. xvi. 12).

The object of the above remarks is not to throw doubt on the Gospels or to disparage them in any way, but to show how utterly impossible it is to posit the Gospels as the one and only basis of the Christian Faith. It is surprising that there are still people who regard the Gospels—and indeed the whole Bible—practically in the same way as Mohammedans regard the Koran; but such is actually the case. As stated above, there are many forms of Christianity, and amongst these we must try to find the true form. Our task, however, is made very simple when we find that, apart from Catholicism, there is one common

feature of all the other forms which otherwise differ greatly from one another, this common feature being belief in the Bible (not only in the Gospels), as the sole source of Christian doctrine and morals. Hence it is convenient to class all these forms together under the term "Protestantism," and our investigation is thus narrowed down to the final choice between Catholicism and Protestantism.

We have already found how utterly untenable the Protestant position is as regards the Gospels, the only historical source of Our Lord's life and personal teaching; but to the difficulties enumerated above we must add the further difficulty of the right *interpretation* of Our Lord's words. Admittedly several of these may be interpreted in many different ways, but Protest-

thus Codex Sinaiticus contains, in addition to the present collection, the Epistle of Barnabas and the "Shepherd" of Hermas; Codex Alexandrinus the Epistles of St. Clement, of which the second is proved to be a forgery, and (originally) the Psalms of Solomon; the Syriac New Testament did not originally contain ii. Pet., ii. and iii. Jn., Jude and Revelation; indeed, for about 400 years there were, as regards certain writings, doubts as to which to include in, and which to exclude from the New Testament. Why, then, should the present collection—and none other—be regarded as the only source of Faith?

Protestantism is equally inconsistent with regard to Ethics. The position seems to be this, that the moral precepts of the whole Bible

are regarded as binding, except so far as they have been abrogated by Christ Himself. It is questionable whether He abrogated the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" foods (St. Peter evidently thought He did not do so—see Acts x. 14), so that a Protestant, if at all consistent, should, at any rate, be doubtful as to the morality of eating pork, hares, and tortoises (Lev. xi. 6, 7, 29). Our Lord certainly did not make any alterations in the Decalogue, and yet Protestants, without any apparent qualms of conscience, make pictures and work on Saturdays, the former being forbidden in the second, the latter in the fourth commandment. And as to ritual, incense is not used by Protestants, though it is distinctly enjoined in Mal. i. 11, and other garments are generally used than

those prescribed in the Bible for ecclesiastical functions.

Enough has been said to prove the inconsistency of Protestantism as to its basis of faith and morals, but the inconsistency does not end here. The Bible is regarded as authoritative on the supposition of its being verbally inspired, i.e. by the Holy Spirit. But as Protestants may only use the Bible to prove the existence of the Holy Spirit and His function of inspiration, we have here a very neat instance of "reasoning in a circle," a not uncommon logical fallacy. Similarly, Protestants believe themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit in their interpretation of the Bible. If this were so, their interpretations would all agree, since the Holy Spirit, as they themselves admit, is infallible; they differ, however, even in

essentials, and cannot therefore all be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and what criterion is there then for ascertaining who are under such guidance, and who are not? Mohammed also believed himself to be under Divine guidance. The result is mere individualism, different faiths for different persons, in other words: religious chaos.

As the common feature of Protestantism, viz. faith, based on a collection of writings, is found to be inconsistent, it is unnecessary to investigate the innumerable forms it assumes, and which it must assume owing to individual interpretation of the Scriptures. Individual interpretation can only be of interest to the individual himself, and it is against the very Scriptures on which Protestants base their faith (see ii. Pet. i. 20, iii. 16). Protestantism

must therefore be rejected, and only Catholicism remains as the one true form of Christianity, the one true religion.

VII. CONSISTENT CHRISTIANITY:

CATHOLICISM.

BY elimination we found that Catholicism is the only consistent religious construction, the Catholic religion the only true religion; but since Catholicism, as well as Protestantism, must posit the Gospels as the ultimate historical source of Christianity, it remains to be seen how Catholicism is able to surmount the difficulties and avoid the inconsistencies in which Protestantism is involved.

It will be noticed that our present problem is analogous with that of establishing the validity of universal truth, treated in Ch. II. Owing

to the unreliability of each separate mental function, universal truth would be unattainable, unless a unifying basis could be found as the noumenon of all phenomena, material and non-material. We then posited God with the result that a consistent construction became possible.

Similarly now, our ultimate source of information concerning Christianity must be the Gospels, but in the last chapter we found that although the Gospels—and we must add, the Acts of the Apostles—can be proved to be generally trustworthy as historical records, yet they fail in affording a sufficient basis for the establishment of an exact and coherent system of Christian Dogmatics. And as we found it impossible merely on the basis of perceptions to pass from individual

to general truth, so now we find it similarly impossible to pass from the Gospels to the whole New Testament as a source of Christian doctrine. In other words, as before, so now: a unifying basis is required, i.e. we must "go behind" the writings that constitute the New Testament and endeavour to find their basis. If then this basis is of sufficient stability, it will be possible to build up the Christian Faith into a coherent and consistent system; if not, everything must remain chaos, as in Protestantism.

It is extremely improbable that the latter should be the case; hence we may expect to find in the Gospels some indication of the direction in which the required basis is to be found. Our Lord's own teaching, as recorded in the Gospels, is seen to be incomplete, and this accords

with His own statement in Jn. xvi. 12: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." It is in this very connection, however, that the solution is to be found; for the Master Himself (as we should expect Him to do), gives us the solution required: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." The basis of Christian doctrine is, then, the Holy Spirit, and thus we have a further analogy: as the basis of universal consistency was found to be God (i.e. the Father), so the basis of consistent religion is also found to be God (i.e. the Holy Spirit), and naturally so, since God must be the basis of all truth, religious and otherwise. Jesus Christ is the Truth (Jn. xiv. 6), and He reveals His religion through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth,

to His Church; such is the essence of Catholicism.

It might be objected that whereas Protestantism is based on the whole New Testament, Catholicism is, in this way, based on but a few words, and the arguments against Protestantism would then be applicable against Catholicism even to a higher degree. But such is not the case. Catholicism is based on the teaching of the Holy Spirit as revealed to the Church; the words in Jn. xvi. 12—14 merely supply the clue for finding this basis. Even if these words were missing or were proved to be spurious, we should arrive at the same basis, but with much greater difficulty and much less certainty. The above passage is but one of many in which Our Lord refers to the mission of the Spirit (cf. Jn. vii. 39; xiv. 16—

17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, etc.), and thus the accumulative evidence would, on merely historical grounds, appear to be sufficient. But further, from Acts we learn that Our Lord commanded the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit (i. 4—5), and that this descent actually took place on the Day of Pentecost (Ch. II.) From that day onwards the Holy Spirit has therefore been with the Church, teaching and guiding it, and is still with the Church, since there is no evidence that He has ever withdrawn His presence.

We somewhat anticipated above in speaking of the Holy Spirit as God; but even if He were not God, He is the Spirit sent by God, and as God cannot err, the Spirit which He sends for the purpose of teaching the Church must be equally infal-

lible. It follows, then, that the Church, in so far as it is guided by the Holy Spirit, is infallible. Individual Christians may err, the greatest theologians may err, the Church of a whole country may err, but the whole Church cannot err, when speaking as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit.

What the whole Church teaches must therefore be the true Faith, i.e. the Catholic Faith, and conversely, the Catholic Faith is the teaching of the whole Church, i.e. the Catholic Church, founded by Jesus Christ Himself, and now extended throughout the whole world. His promise to send the Holy Spirit was given to His Church, and to none other; hence if individuals separate themselves from His Church, they are no longer under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,

and their opinions are of no importance whatsoever in deciding the teaching of the Catholic Church on any particular point. There cannot exist within the Catholic Church any communities with their own distinctive teaching, nor can the Catholic Church be divided into departments, each with their own teaching; as Christ only founded one Church, the Church must be one; and as there is only one Holy Spirit, the teaching of the Church must be one; whatever deviates from this teaching is heresy.

This is the principle on which the Church has worked from the day of its foundation throughout all these ages; as questions have arisen, the Church has settled such questions in her Œcumenical Councils, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus the question as regards the

necessity of circumcision was settled at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.—notice the significant words in verse 28:—" it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us "), the doctrine of Christ's Divinity was fully established at the Council of Nicæa and the *Homoousion* (Christ being "of one substance with the Father") decided upon, the doctrine of the unity of His Personality was established at the Council of Ephesus, that of His Dual Nature at the Council of Chalcedon, and so on throughout history.

As, however, the guidance of the Holy Spirit is permanent and not restricted to the sessions of Œcumenical Councils, it follows that the teaching of the Church is found not only in conciliar decrees, but also in the common teaching, or common tradition, of the Church. Thus

many questions, not hitherto decided, may be discussed first by a few theologians, then by more and more, till at last, after having passed through a state of fluctuation, they become matters of universal agreement, and in this way receive œcumenical authority. Hence many points may be regarded as settled now which were still unsettled—perhaps not even thought of—centuries ago, i.e. the Catholic Church provides for development of doctrine, as well as for re-statement and re-definition of doctrines explicitly or implicitly held from the beginning. The Vincentian Canon that the true Faith is what has been taught "*semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*" must therefore be regarded—as St. Vincent himself evidently regarded it—as a general statement, not to be taken in its strictly literal sense. The true

Faith is what the whole Church teaches now. "The faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (St. Jude, verse 3), can never be altered, but it may be re-stated in accordance with modern thought and modern language; it is possible that such a re-statement of Christian Dogma is one of the greatest needs of the present day, and would tend to the minimizing of the divisions among Christians who, after all, only wish to be true disciples of the same Master. Such a task, however, may only be attempted by Catholic theologians; all others must—as already Tertullian pointed out—be ruled out of court as unreliable witnesses.

The fundamental difference between Catholics and Protestants is constituted by their different bases of doctrine. The Protestant basis is the New Testament, the Catholic

basis is the Church, and history shows that, so far, Catholicism is right, since the Church existed long before the New Testament, and it is obvious that a structure cannot exist prior to the foundation which supports it.

In this connection we have a good instance of the above-mentioned gradual development. The Bible of Our Lord and His immediate followers was the Old Testament, which they interpreted allegorically in accordance with Rabbinical tradition, without, however, resorting to Rabbinical casuistry. Some twenty years after the descent of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul began to write his Epistles; these were read by the local Churches to which they were addressed, but no one—least of all St. Paul himself—then dreamed of regarding them as "Scripture,"

i.e. as on a par with the Old Testament. Meanwhile, Gospels were written as well as other books and letters by divers authors; these were read, some here, some there, by the different congregations, not because they were "Holy Scripture" or the "Word of God" or "inspired," but simply because their authors were men of eminence in the Church, speaking with the authority resulting from such eminence. As time elapsed, writings emanating from Apostles or men closely connected with Apostles (e.g. St. Mark who was St. Peter's interpreter), naturally became treasures, and were estimated as such, the greatest of all treasures being, of course, biographies of the Master, especially after the death of those who had known Him personally. Thus by the middle of the second century,

we find scattered throughout the Christian world a number of Christian writings, biographies of Our Lord, probably collections of His most important words, letters written by Apostles and others, theological essays, books of devotion and apologetic writings; most of these were read indiscriminately, partly by individual Christians, partly at Divine Service, but none regarded them as in any way "inspired" or on a level with the official Church Lessons taken from the Old Testament. Additions were sometimes made to the Gospels in different localities; thus the *pericope adulteræ* (Jn. viii. 1—11), hitherto only known by oral tradition, came to be inserted in St. John's Gospel or, in some MSS., in St. Luke's, the last twelve verses were added to St. Mark's Gospel, marginal notes were

inserted in the text, improvements in grammar and diction were made by different copyists, incidents from one Gospel were inserted in another Gospel, harmonies were made of the four Gospels, and soon the Gospels and other writings (especially those emanating from the Apostles), were translated into different languages. This accounts for the variants mentioned in the last chapter, and at the same time testifies to the fact that the writings were not then regarded as inspired in any special way, and certainly not as *verbally* inspired.

As the number of such writings was constantly increasing, and as a great number of heretical writings had also made their appearance, it soon became necessary for the Church to weed out the latter by declaring officially which writ-

ings were to be regarded as "authoritative," i.e. in full agreement with the traditional teaching of the Church. Thus arose the question of fixing the Canon, i.e. the list of such writings. This, however, was a very gradual process. The four Gospels had, of course, been regarded as canonical practically from the time they were written, likewise St. Paul's Epistles as written by one who was always regarded as an Apostle, but the Epistle to the Hebrews, the so-called Catholic Epistles and especially the Apocalypse, were for a long time hanging in the balance, till at last they too were included in the Canon. Likewise some writings which were finally excluded from the Canon, such as the Psalms of Solomon, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, the "Shep-

herd" and others. At last, at the third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397), it was ordained that "besides the Canonical Scriptures, nothing be read in the Church under the title of Divine Scriptures," and a list of these writings was appended comprising the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament writings as we have them now. It is a most significant fact that thus the writings now constituting our New Testament were declared canonical (as late as the end of the fourth century), simply because they were found to agree in all details with the Church's teaching. More might have been included, some might have been excluded, if the Church had so decided; the present selection, however, remains as containing, in an easily accessible form, the teaching of the Church, or rather,

part of the teaching. Catholics, therefore, believe every word of the New Testament, just as much as the Protestants do, but simply because they know it to be in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church. In exactly the same way they believe the Creeds, the decisions of the Œcumenical Councils, and the rest of the common tradition of the Catholic Church; they too, regard the writers of the New Testament as inspired, but not in the sense that makes inspiration synonymous with intrinsic infallibility.

It is clear, then, that the Bible must be interpreted in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, and hence individualism is *ipso facto* excluded. As to the difficulty, mentioned in the last chapter, of not having Our Lord's words in their original form, this is regret-

table for those who understand Aramaic, but does not in any way minimize the importance of these words, since it is the common tradition of the Church that they convey the exact meaning of the words actually spoken by Our Lord, and each Greek word may thus be regarded as a precious pearl preserved for us by the Church. It would also be regrettable if it should be proved that the Fourth Gospel was not written by St. John, the disciple "whom Jesus loved," but this would in no wise shake our faith in the said Gospel as a true record of the Master's acts and teaching. As to textual variants, these do not make any text deviate from the Church's teaching; even if no account of Our Lord's Ascension be found in the Gospels, a full account is found in Acts, and even if it were not found

in any part of the Bible, we should believe it all the same, since we know it to be part of the teaching of the Church. Whatever Holy Church teaches is true, whether it be written in the Bible or not; she does not derive her teaching from the Bible, but has declared the New Testament to be in agreement with her teaching, the Old Testament to be a progressive revelation leading up to the fundamental fact of the Catholic Religion, the Incarnation of God the Son.

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly"—such are the stern words implying the absolute submission, the absolute abandonment of religious individual-

ism which Catholicism implies. And the reason for this is clear; for to doubt any part of the Catholic Faith would involve doubt of the veracity of the Holy Spirit, and blasphemy against the Spirit is unpardonable (Mt. xii. 31—32).

As with doctrine, so with morals, in deciding what is right or wrong Holy Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is infallible. Thus we do not do this and avoid that, primarily because it is so ordered in the Bible, but in obedience to the decrees or the common tradition of the Church. The Church, e.g., declares the Decalogue to be in accordance with her Ethics, with the modification, however, that the prohibition in the first part of the second Commandment is abolished, and Sunday substituted for Saturday as the weekly day of rest and

worship. She has full authority to "bind and loose" (Mt. xviii. 18). She also fixes Feast Days and Fast Days, and regulates worship and ritual quite apart from any biblical directions, and through her priests she deals with individual souls in the Confessional. It is for her to decide the conditions for valid Sacraments and the exact methods of administering the Sacraments.

Catholics do not reverence the Holy Scriptures any less than the Protestants do. Catholic copyists have preserved them, Catholic martyrs have given up their lives rather than the Holy Books, Catholic theologians have studied them more than any other writings, and brought out their meaning in innumerable commentaries; they are read at all the Services of the Catholic Church,

and at the chief act of worship the reading of the Gospel is accompanied by special ceremonies, and the book of the Gospels is kissed by the priest to symbolize the reverence with which the Catholic Church regards the Holy Scriptures. In a general sense they are looked upon as the "word of God," but THE WORD of God must always be He who was and is God, the Incarnate Lord.

CONCLUSION.

THE goal of all investigation, whether scientific or theological, is truth; all kinds of research, if properly carried out, converge towards truth, and, as we have endeavoured to show, the common element in all research is the establishment of consistency of experience. Since, then, the methods are essentially the same, and the goal is the same, there should not be any real antagonism between the different departments of knowledge, as long as all seekers after truth keep within their own respective spheres. Time was when a naturalist like Darwin was looked upon as an enemy of the Church,

though he but formulated scientifically what was already implied in Genesis, and a philosopher like Spencer was mistrusted by the Church, though he contributed to the establishment of a proper philosophical basis for theistic proofs, and even now, textual and "higher" critics are regarded with suspicion by conservative theologians, though the aim of the latter is to arrive at the truth in connection with the documents of the Holy Scriptures, and of the former to weed out the clerical errors of careless copyists and correct their unwarranted alterations of the Sacred Text.

On the other hand, scientists have derided theologians for going beyond what they consider to be the limits of human knowledge, and their language has not always been expressive of the respect which

every one should feel towards that which stirs the best and tenderest and deepest feelings of the human soul.

But we are gradually forgetting the many mistakes on either side, and a rapprochement between scientists and theologians is apparent, the former recognizing that there are mysteries which surpass—and must surpass—natural science, and yet are an integral element of truth, the latter that progress in science really means progress towards God.

The Church is the guide in faith and morals, but not in science, and *vice versa,* the scientists, as scientists, must remain within the limits constituted by matter. When spirit and matter come to be regarded by either party as but two co-ordinated manifestations of the same God, full

unity will be reached, and we shall have theological scientists as well as scientific theologians, each regarding himself as a humble contributor to the gradual heightening of the structure of human knowledge built on the foundation of belief in God, and with God as its ultimate goal.

Truth is the ideal towards which all aspire, but the truth established by scientific research merges into the truth revealed by Jesus Christ through His Holy Church—not two truths, but one truth, the

VERITAS VERITATUM.

For the more extensive study of the subjects dealt with in this book, the following works are recommended:—

Ryland:—*The Story of Thought and Feeling.*

Hoffding:—*Outlines of Psychology.*

Jevons:—*Elementary Lessons in Logic.*

Mackenzie:—*Outlines of Metaphysics.*

Campbell Fraser:—*Philosophy of Theism.*

Spencer:—*First Principles.*

Janet:—*Final Causes.*

Illingworth:—*Divine Immanence.*

Howard:—*Studies of Non-Christian Religions.*

Westcott:—*History of the Canon.*

Darwell Stone:—*The Christian Church.*

Darwell Stone:—*Outlines of Christian Dogma.*

NATURALISM AND THE CHURCH

A Study of Evolution as a Demonstration of Catholic Truth.

BY

C. R. CHAPMAN B.Sc.

Price 2/6 net in cloth (2/9 post free.)

CONTENTS.

I. The *Summum Bonum.*
II. The Work of the Church
III. Christianity and National Life.
IV. The Christian Synthesis.
V. Christianity and the Goal of Thought.

ENGLAND AND ROME.

A STUDY IN CATHOLIC ASSENT.

Reprinted with additions from
La Revue Thomiste

BY

HAKLUYT EGERTON.

Price 1/6 net in cloth (1/9 post free).
In paper cover 1/- net (1/2 post free).

This essay is generally accepted on the Continent as the most convincing statement of the Catholic position of the Church of England.

230.3R
St 32

Steenbuch, Rev. C.

Veritas veritatum: an essay on truth.

230.3R
St 32